

Project Profile

USG® Cavity Shaft Wall Systems

Application/Building Type:

Educational Environment

Project Name:

Gleacher Center of the University of Chicago
Graduate School of Business

Location:

Chicago, Illinois

Architect:

Lohan Associates

Subcontractor:

Anning Johnson Co.

Featured Products:

USG® Cavity Shaft Wall Systems
SHEETROCK® Brand 3/4-inch Gypsum Panels
ULTRACODE® Core

usg.com


Value Engineering 101

Building a 215,000-square-foot academic facility on a pie-shaped site, wedged between skyscrapers and a river, with an absolute 18-month deadline to accommodate the start of classes—that's a real-world challenge where experience, skill, and knowledge are put to the test.

The \$44 million Gleacher Center of the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business serves adult students with full-time jobs working after hours on MBA degrees. The building also competes with nearby hotels as a state-of-the-art conference center and banquet facility, and houses the business school's corporate and non-degree executive education programs. Just six stories tall, the structure's design distinguishes it from its formidable neighbors—the Chicago Tribune and Equitable buildings, and the NBC Tower. Roughly triangular in shape, the precast-covered building shell is punctuated by glass-enclosed projections and 13 cantilevered lecture halls. The building also includes 16 conventional classrooms, group study rooms, lounges, staff offices, library, bookstore and conference center.

"One problem we faced was the overall schedule for the project," explained Will Gamble, AIA, associate at Lohan Associates, Chicago, who served as project architect. "The complexity of the design, plus the difficulties of working at a downtown site, made what would normally be a tight schedule under the best of circumstances even tighter."

Limited access to the site, downtown congestion, use of the existing foundation and worry about the neighboring buildings and river were among his concerns. "Anything the contractors could do to help the schedule was important," said Gamble.

One of the first priorities on the structure's interior was the construction and enclosure of stairwells, so that workers could get up and down quickly without lifts. And that's where "value engineering" was helpful.

"We call it 'value engineering'—when you can achieve the client's goals in less time, for less money, and still provide the same quality, appearance and fire rating," said John Stralka, senior project manager at Anning-Johnson Co., Melrose Park, Ill.

In this case, the acoustical and drywall contractor suggested changing the architect's specification for two-hour fire-rated USG® cavity shaft wall systems used in stairwells, elevator shafts and mechanical walls. Instead of a system using two layers of standard gypsum panel on the finished sides of the shafts, Stralka recommended using just one layer per side of 3/4-inch SHEETROCK® brand gypsum panels, ULTRACODE® Core, to achieve the same two-hour-rated system, saving valuable time as well reducing labor and material costs.

"We were given a very limited time to work, and by using ULTRACODE Panels, we were able to get in and out very fast," Stralka recalled.

Anning Johnson Company handled the building's complicated partitions between classrooms and lecture halls, which in many areas required double-layer systems, sound batts, acoustical sealants and sealing around outlets to provide a sound-resistant environment. Gypsum panels and finishing, ceilings and wall systems were supplied by USG.

"Using one supplier was important to ensure the compatibility of all the materials to achieve the necessary fire ratings. And with our tight schedule, if there were any problems or questions, all I had to do was make one phone call to my representative at USG, and the problem was solved," said Stralka. Sounds like good business sense.